

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT  
March 22, 1963

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TO: U - Mr. Hartman

Presidential Public  
Statements on Cuba

Attached are additional inserts for the compendium of Presidential statements on Cuba which was transmitted to you under cover of a memorandum from the Secretary to all Assistant Secretaries dated March 7, 1963.

Future Presidential statements on Cuba will be forwarded to your office periodically and should be inserted in the basic set of documents.

The individual statements should be placed at the tab number that has been indicated on the first page of each paper.

EPD  
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Ext. 5261

Attachment:

As stated.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, A/CDC/MB

REVIEWED by JK DATE 3/22/63

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FOUR AMERICANS  
Pré's Conférence - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you say whether the four Americans who died in the Bay of Pigs invasion were employees of the Government or the CIA?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would say that there are a good many Americans in the last 15 years who have served their country in a good many different ways, a good many abroad, some of them have lost their lives. The United States Government has not felt that it was helpful to our interest and particularly in the struggle against this armed doctrine which we are in struggle all around the world to go into great detail.

Let me say about these four men: They were serving their country. The flight that cost them their lives was a voluntary flight and that while because of the nature of their work it has not been a matter of public record, as it might be in the case of soldiers or sailors, I can say that they were serving their country.

As I say, their work was voluntary.

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RUSSIAN TROOPS  
Press Conference, March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, three related questions. Do you have any accurate information on the number of Russian troops who have been removed from Cuba? Are you satisfied with the rate of troop removal and was there in the Russian aid memoir any suggestion or provision for verification of troop removal?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the answer to your question would really be no to all of them.

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TRAINING OF LATIN AMERICANS IN CUBA

Press Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, as you prepare for your visit to Costa Rica this month, there seems to be a position there among the Central American countries in Panama that the United States should take a more active leadership in attacking the problem of Cuba. I wonder if you could give us some of your thoughts about how you think this project should move along that you might find it possible to discuss with your colleagues there in San Jose?

THE PRESIDENT: Well one of the matters of course that is of interest to us is the question of the movement of people in and out who might be trained by the Communists in Cuba for guerilla work or even subversion in other parts of the hemisphere. This is an action which must be taken by each of the countries in Latin America. We are making proposals to them bilaterally. There has been an OAS Committee which has reported on the need for control. Now it is up to the Latin American countries, I would hope in common consultation as well as individually, to take those steps which will control the movement of people in and out. So we will know who they are, why they are going, what happens to them when they get there, when they are coming out, and what happens to them when they come out. This is the kind of thing which each country finally has to do itself because it is part of the element of sovereignty that the control of movement is

within the country of citizenship, but we are bringing this to the attention of the Latin American countries as perhaps one of the most important things we can do this winter. In addition, there have been other things which have been done on trade, diplomatic recognition and all the rest. I think we have indicated very clearly that what we feel is the wisest policy is the isolation of Communism in this hemisphere. We would hope that the countries of Latin America with us will participate actively with us in that program.

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NEGOTIATIONS WITH CUBAPress Conference, March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday UN Secretary General U Thant received a letter from the Cuban Foreign Minister in which Roa hinted that the Cubans might like to discuss the resumption of friendly relations with us. I wonder if you think that this might be possible, and if so, what conditions would have to be met first?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand the note had some reference to it from Havana but the note actually delivered from the U.N. did not have any such reference. We have had no indication that there is a desire to resume friendly relations with us. We have said on many occasions that we regard the present Soviet presence in Cuba as unacceptable to us and we regard the Communization of Cuba and the attempt to subvert the hemisphere as matters which are not negotiable. I don't see any evidence that there is in prospect a normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States.

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OL BLOCKADE  
Press Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ambassador, or former Ambassador Guillermo Belt, the Ambassador from Cuba to the United States in the old days, said in a lecture at Georgetown Visitation Convent last Sunday that Castro would not be able to survive two weeks if he was denied Soviet oil. I wonder if there isn't something that you can do about this, or maybe bring greater pressure on some of our allies who are shipping Soviet oil in their ships to Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but those are not our figures. There isn't any doubt that over a long period of time that denial of oil would make a difference. To deny the oil would require, of course, a blockade, and a blockade is an act of war, and you should be prepared to go for it. I think we indicated last October that in periods where we considered the United States was in danger, we were prepared to go as far as was needed to remove that danger, and we would, of course, be willing always to do so again, if we felt there was a situation which carried with it that kind of danger to the United States.

But you should not be under any impression that a blockade is not an act of war, because when a ship refuses to stop, and then you then sink the ship, there is usually a military response by the country involved. We are attempting to persuade NATO and other countries not to ship to Cuba,

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but the primary source of shipments into Cuba are bloc ships, and at this time we do not believe that war in the Caribbean is to the national advantage.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, of late, some of your Congressional critics have started to charge that your Administration has been deliberately withholding important information on the Cuban situation. Among the claims that have been made is that your Central Intelligence chief, John McCone, actually knew before October 14th that the Soviets had planted offensive missiles in Cuba. Is there anything that you can say on this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have seen charges of all kinds, one day distinguished Republican charges that it is all the CIA's fault, and the next day it is the Defense Department's fault, and the next day the CIA is being made a scapegoat by another distinguished leader. So that we could not possibly answer these charges, which come so fast and so furiously. Mr. Arens said the other day that the testimony by the Air Force before the committee indicated that we knew all about this October 10th, even though General LeMay made it very clear in the same testimony that the Air Force didn't have such information. So we are not in a position to answer these.

I think in hindsight, I suppose we could have always perhaps picked up these missile bases a few days earlier, but not very many days earlier, because the missiles didn't come in, at least in hindsight it now appears, until some time around the middle of September. The

Installation began at a later date. They were very fast, and I think the photography on the same areas, if we had known that missiles were going in, 10 days before might not have picked up anything. The week before might have picked up something. In the pictures taken October 14th were only obvious to the most sophisticated expert. It was not until the pictures taken really the 16th and 17th that you had pictures that would be generally acceptable. So this was a very clandestine and fast operation. So I feel that the intelligence services did a very good job. When you think that the job was done, the missiles were discovered, the missiles were removed, the bombers were discovered, the bombers were removed, I don't think that anybody should feel that anything but a good job was done. But I think we can always improve, and particularly with the advantage of hindsight. I am satisfied with Mr. McCone, the intelligence community, the Defense Department and the job they did in those days particularly taken in totality.